

BLOWOUTS

May 2001 - April 2004

(Excerpts)

by Bárbara Belloc

English translation by Hillary Gardner

October 26, 1968

I received your letter the day before yesterday and was deeply moved by it!

(...)

I've had some dramatic visions: I see total darkness and man in the beginning of existence, like a primitive, discovering his own body, rediscovering the act, the world like some other strange, wild planet.

I see also how a dead person is so anonymous that the only truth in a cemetery is neighborhood, and that what gives him individuality is the tombstone with his name written on it. (...) Seeing this I become sad and I cry over the impossibility of anonymity through which we could begin our lives anew every single day.

(...) Because for me, the stones or the plastic bags I come across are a single thing: they all serve solely to express a proposition. If I still make something it is for this reason. I don't see why to deny an object only because we make it.

Lygia Clark to Hélio Oiticica: *Letters 1964 - 74*.

I would pay
I'd pay in leather

At night Difunta Correa awakes and roams around like a zombie does: her eyes red with hate for her captors, her hands raised, skull held high. She wears the same tattered sky blue nightgown, an old silver bracelet on her wrist, a swaying cross, a glass, intact, in hand. She ravages the valleys where man and beast seldom tread. Sometimes she howls and makes faces. Her steps leave no trace, and wither the grass she tramples. The idle-tongued swear that one night she came upon a poet walking in S's down an empty block, heading home, thinking of nothing, or verses. That, invisible, the dead saint passed by. That after that, the poet wrote a poem that got published in the country's most important paper—and his countrymen sang his praises. That as a result of his success, he got invited to participate in a popular national political movement. That after the first assembly, the group, which included the poet, took on the name purely by chance "The Difunta Correa Party". One year later, Difunta Correa came in second-to-last in an election that had barely five thousand voters.
(One good deed deserves another)

/

The legless girl asks to pray *standing*. The President of the U.S. declares: "[To believe] in a peaceful world order in which nations can compete on an economic battlefield and not with tanks or missiles in bloody wars." The legless girl asks to pray *standing*. The French Premiere asks for cheese and is given a bone from the left leg lost by the girl. The legless girl asks to pray *standing*. The Israeli Prime Minister accuses his British counterpart of having delivered, in the year following the fateful event that caused her to lose both legs, the girl to the Palestinians. The legless girl asks to pray *standing*. Meanwhile, the Chinese Politburo mobilizes its troops to the northern border as the people do not walk, they travel by train.
(Res non verba)

Hosannah:
Hidden ossuary

The old man can hardly move, he's in hell, a shell of himself: all white and calcified, quite still in the depths of The Aegean Residence, with no pearl in his mouth, no coin in his pocket, his bones flattened like a manta ray's, an unmoving fan in an even more unmoving hand... Stiff, mute, he's waiting for a visitor; a dancer frozen in mid-air, mid-leap, the moment he's subjected to an x-ray, the effects of which transform him into the idea of a dead man caught in the fugacity of movement, just as the ribcage, kneecaps, femur, sacrum, start to fall to the floor. He's a nuclear victim, entirely worthy of a reliquary, waiting for the afterlife as if waiting for a ship that just set sail, as if waiting for a cure, as if waiting for love from one who doesn't love. He resembles a cistern. He resembles a water fountain empty of water, made of stone. But he can hear everything, just not what is happening: he hears the river running and the wooden crickets, the gurgle of the valve climbing to the surface, the crackling of the serpent's skin.

(Seaside souvenir)

Paradise is mourning
The broom brush is mourning
Your fate as a vain
Bride among the clusters
Of purple grapes and roses.
Bauquis: your virgin mouth
Your silhouette—a boat in the water
Was robbed of the wedding feasts
While on Uranus the garlands
The birds weave with their beaks
Dissolve into petals
Crypts, mud, rinds, oars...
(Theory of chaos?)